

## Mistake - 19

Exhaustion hit me like Kara's truck when Emily Left. I sighed and sat on the bed. Closing my eyes, I sent a silent prayer to the big guy. Let this be my break, please. Grabbing a change of clothes, I showered and sat on the bed when someone knocked on the door. I groaned, wanting only to lie down and go to sleep. I opened the door to a tall, blonde, Viking looking guy.

"Hey, Brook right?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said with a little uncertainty.

He laughed a quiet laugh. "The alpha asked me to bring you to him."

My heart jolted into a sprint. "The alpha wants to see me?"

"Yep, but nothing to worry about. He just likes to meet all our guests. You know for politeness and all that."

"Do I have to?" I asked, my fingers gripping the doorknob.

"Well, I suppose you don't have to, but that would be rude, don't you think?"

I didn't really care about being rude, but it wasn't a good idea to get on the bad side of another alpha. "Okay, lead the way." I stepped out of my room and the guy led me down the hall.

"I'm Andy, by the way," he said as we walked.

"Nice to meet you," I replied, though I didn't mean it. He must have picked up on it because he laughed again.



"So I heard you and I have something in common," he said. I looked him up and down. He and I, something in common? I doubted that. He grinned, and it lit up his entire face. "My parents aren't mates either."

My head shot up, which sent a thrum of pain through it. "What? Really?"

"It's not as uncommon as some would like to make us think it is," Andy replied with a shrug.

"Well, at least you're a werewolf. I'm just a lowly human."

He tilted his head as we walked down the staircase. "You don't seem that short to me."

"That's not what I meant."

He grinned. "Human, werewolf. Don't matter. Only people matter and my first impression is you're pretty cool, Brook."

"Thanks." This time I meant it.

"No problem," Andy said, stopping at a pair of large patio doors. "He's just out there. I'll see you around."

Again, my stomach clenched, and I stood there for a good minute before I forced myself to go outside. The alpha was alone on the patio, sitting at a metal table laden with food. As soon as he saw me, he stood up. "Ah, Brook. Nice to put a face to the name. Come, sit." He pulled out a chair next to his. When I sat he asked, "Hungry?" My stomach answered for me with a loud growl. With a small half smile that reminded me a lot of Ryder, he prepared a plate and set it in front of me. I wondered if that was a werewolf thing because Harry did that too.

"You wanted to see me?" I kept my gaze on the plate as I picked up my



fork.

"Yes, but how about we eat first then talk shop?"

I didn't want to wait, but again, I didn't want to get on his bad side, so I ate.

"There is nothing like a good cooked meal. I hoped you enjoyed it," the alpha said, putting aside his own plate and leaning back in his chair. "I want to reiterate what my mate has told you. This isn't Black Mountain and while you remain here, you are safe."

"Thank you, Sir," I said, clasping my hands in my lap.

"No need for sir. You can call me Mr. Williams if you'd like. I just wanted to say I'm thrilled to meet you."

Say what? "Why would you be happy to meet me?"

A look of frustration crossed his face, and I stiffened. "He hasn't told you?"

"He?"

"Ryder," he replied and sighed, shaking his head. "Normally, this is a conversation for you to have with him, but you can't trust us if we are keeping secrets. So we can't wait for him to quit dicking around, can we?"

Confused, I shrugged.

He offered me another small smile. "I am happy to meet you and you'll find people extra curious about you, is because you are Ryder's mate and our future luna."



No way did I hear that right. "I'm sorry, say what?"

"You are Ryder's mate."

"But I don't really know Ryder. We're not dating or anything like that. I'm not his mate." He had to be messing with me.

"Mates are not mere titles we give to our partners, like a girlfriend or spouse. Mates are the ideal partner for a werewolf. Now the hows and whys are all semantics the faithful and scientists continue to argue about, and a topic best to discuss at another time. What is important to know is that we detect our mates by scent. It's unmistakable. From the first day he met you, Ryder knew you were his."

"Well, it has to be mistakable. I can't be Ryder's mate. I'm human," I argued, panic rose in me.

"It's not. You are, and being human has nothing to do with it," he replied. His tone left no room for argument.

All the little odd things about Ryder made a lot more sense. Another thing also made sense. "You won't let me leave, are you?"

The alpha frowned as he looked at me. "That is not my choice to make. Once your observation period is over, and you're given a clean bill of health, it's up to you and your family to decide what happens next."

"You want me to believe you'll let me walk out of here being your son's mate?" I didn't believe it. Not for a minute.

"Fate has deemed you as the best match for my son and our luna, but you must decide if my son and this pack are the best match for you. Though I warn you, my son is quite the stubborn one. He doesn't give up easily. I have no doubts wherever you choose to go he'll follow. Ryder seems



quite taken with you already."

My cheeks warmed. "But..."

Alpha Brent held up his hand to stop me. "It's his life, his choice."

I sighed, rubbing my temple. The nagging headache I had before crept up on me, much stronger now. "Sir— Mr. Williams," I said, deciding to test just how different he was. "I can't... I'm not..."

His expression turned sad now. "I understand why you would think that. You've suffered at the hands of Michael Howe and his pack. I know you're afraid of us, but if you give us a chance, I promise we'll show you not all werewolves are like those you've met there. Just allow us that chance please."

His plea surprised me, and I didn't quite know what to say in response. It was reasonable, much more reasonable than I had expected from him. Before I said a word, he continued. "Let's get you back to your room so you can get the rest you came here for." He offered me a smile as he stood. Ryder's father escorted me back to my room and offered me a good night before he left.

I closed the door and sat on the bed. He had to be wrong. I couldn't be Ryder's mate. I was no ideal partner for anyone, let alone Ryder. He was the future alpha, and I was... well, I was Missy Mistake. No, there had to be some kind of miscommunication here. I couldn't be Ryder's mate. I climbed into bed and buried myself under the thick blankets, wishing I would fall asleep so I wouldn't have to think any more about that whole mate thing. For once, God complied.

After nearly twelve hours of sleep, I shuffled to the bathroom. I vaguely remembered Emily coming to check on me several times during the





night. I stood in front of the mirror and despite my eyes being only half open, the dark reddish-purple bruise surrounding my stitches was extremely noticeable. The dark circles under my eye were just as noticeable thanks to my too pale complexion. That wasn't even mentioning the disaster that was my hair.

I turned from the mirror, unable to look at myself any longer. It wasn't me I saw anymore, but a victim. Never once had I felt like a victim. A person with crappy luck, yes, but not once a victim. Closing my eyes, I fought the tears that wanted to fall. I hated feeling like this. I couldn't hold back the tears any longer. Stupid Mike! I slapped the edge of the sink. I hated him so much! In a fit of anger, I continued to hit the sink with a growl worthy of any werewolf.

When I finished, my breath came out in ragged pants and the heel of my palm hurt. However, I felt a little better. With a sniff, I turned on the faucet. Careful of the stitches, I washed my face. I would not be a victim. I changed and returned to the bathroom. This time armed with my makeup and hairbrush. First, I started on my hair. It was dirty since I couldn't wash it, so I brushed it out and braided it. Next, I worked on covering up the bruise and dark circles, but didn't stop there and went for the whole package. With my mood improved, I ventured out in the search of food.

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